

PHOTO | CONTRIBUTED



Submetering regulations have made it possible for Hartford's 777 Main to sell fuel cell electricity to tenants.

Electric submetering rolls out in CT

By Matt Pilon
mpilon@HartfordBusiness.com

After years of dispute and regulatory wrangling, electricity "submetering" is gaining traction in Connecticut, with more than 1,800 Connecticut apartment units now authorized to use the practice, which allows landlords to measure and bill tenants for their individual monthly electricity use.

Since drafting submetering regulations in 2014 and 2015, the Public Utilities Regulatory

Authority (PURA) has approved its use at eight major apartment buildings in Hartford, Hamden and New Haven.

The goal is to reduce electricity consumption by making consumers in multi-family residences bear responsibility for their personal energy use. The new regulations also allow landlords of sub-metered buildings to invest in renewable energy and sell that power back to tenants, which wasn't allowed under previous state law.

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Turf Wars

Some municipalities are raising concerns about the state's effort to increase its role in transit-oriented development.

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HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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SPECIAL SECTION PGS. 9-30

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Fantasy Sports

A state lawmaker says a proposal to legalize and regulate fantasy sports betting in Connecticut could bring the state millions in new revenue.

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Municipalities wary of larger state role in transit-oriented development

By Gregory Seay
gseay@HartfordBusiness.com

Revival this short legislative session of a controversial plan to place in state hands greater oversight of development on or near busway depots and rail stations is gaining wider support from municipalities, but is still raising concerns from some critics.

Senate Bill 19, which proposes to create the quasi-public Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority (TCDAA), is a reworked version of a measure that failed in last spring's legislative session to create a statewide overseer of public and private development adjacent to state-funded transportation initiatives.

Critics say the revised measure is a veiled effort by the state to interfere in towns' sovereign authority to oversee how land inside their borders is used.

Supporters — including the Malloy administration — counter that, at its core, the measure aims to unlock the development potential for hundreds of developed/undeveloped acres next door to existing or planned busway and rail depots statewide.

The bill recently passed the legislature's Planning and Development Committee and has several measures in it to placate concerns raised by municipalities last year. It requires, for example, a town or city to invite the TCDAA to participate in a project within its borders and forces the authority to abide by local zoning, subdivision and wetland regulations.

This version also is stripped of a provision contained in last year's bill that would have given the state eminent domain powers to seize private property to clear the way for development. That provision raised deep concerns from local governments and ultimately led to the bill's failure, officials said.

The new bill also gives communities that host transit-oriented development a say in the authority's affairs, by making them eligible for seats on its board. Furthermore, SB 19 embraces a more inclusive name for the agency, inserting "assistance" into its title.

The measure is being proposed as several major transportation initiatives take root in Connecticut, including the 9.4-mile CTfastrak busway, which opened in March 2015, linking New Britain to downtown Hartford. It currently averages more than 16,000 riders



Developers have proposed erecting new apartments in West Hartford (right, top photo) and New Britain (right, bottom) at sites near the CTfastrak busway.

daily, many of whom are potential diners, shoppers and tenants for various housing and retail options developers are eager to provide along the busway corridor.

Meanwhile, parallel efforts are underway to enhance commuter-rail service between Hartford and New Haven, and communities in between, widening the door to more private investment in development along those routes, too, observers say.

Opposing viewpoints

State Sen. Toni Boucher (R-Wilton) said she still opposes the measure because cities and towns already rely on their own planning and zoning commissions to guide their land-use decisions. Moreover, Boucher said, the state's fiscal crisis is no time to be allocating \$250,000 to staff and run another bureaucracy.

"They can't manage their own departments, and other agencies of the state are in trouble," she said. "And now they want to impose themselves on local towns and cities?"

In Newington, where consideration of any project in or adjacent to the town's transit corridor is under a one-year moratorium through June, Republican Mayor Roy Zartarian, who also testified against SB 19, likened it to the mythic "Trojan horse" of Greek lore. Newington is home to two CTfastrak depots.

"I think it's a first step ... to take over control of transit-oriented development," Zartarian said of the state's intent. "We know development is going to happen, but we want to be the one calling the shots."

But some communities and the regional government councils to which they belong support creating a transit-development authority.

Lyle Wray, executive director of Hartford-based Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG), said his member towns host 15 CTTransit and CTfastrak stations. Many, Wray said, are eager for development of apartments, retail and other commercial and public spaces next door to those stations, and a transit-development authority could accommodate those aims.

"You are helping towns to do the economic development they want," Wray said.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), of which Newington is among 115 municipal members, reversed course this year and is embracing SB 19, largely because the eminent-domain provision is gone and a provision giving TOD communities more say in the authority's affairs was added, said COST Executive Director Betsy Gara.

"We want to ensure municipalities and councils of governments have a seat at the table," Gara said.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

and Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments also support the measure. The Stamford-based Western Connecticut Council of Governments, representing communities in the southwest corner, opposes the bill — again.

The state Department of Transportation, meantime, referred questions about SB 19 to the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM), whose undersecretary for legislative affairs, Gian-Carl Casa, testified on OPM's behalf in support of the measure.

Casa said the TCDAA could prove invaluable to communities that tap its expertise without having to hire extra staff or train existing ones. Moreover, involving TCDAA in commercial development would be voluntary for communities, Casa and other SB 19 supporters say.

"Many municipalities are asking for help in doing complex TOD projects at transit hubs," Casa said via email. "The municipal supporters say that local governments often do not have the expertise that a focused assistance authority can give them."

East Hartford Mayor Marcia LeClerc, who sits on the board of the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), which coordinates public-private investment around the Capital

Continued

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9:00 PM

SUNDAY 3
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1:00 PM

EVERY FACE HAS A NAME & REMEMBER
4:00 PM
10% MY CHILD & BULMUS
4:00 PM

SUNDAY 3 Continued
TO LIFE!
7:30 PM

DOUGH
7:30 PM

MONDAY 4
ARE YOU JOKING? & THE TEN PLAGUES
7:00 PM

IN SEARCH OF ISRAELI CUISINE
5:30 PM Zahav
A La Carte
7:00 PM Film

TUESDAY 5
THE MUSES OF ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER & 70 HESTER STREET
1:00 pm

TUESDAY 5 Continued
IMBER'S LEFT HAND
7:00 PM

WEDNESDAY 6
KICKING OUT SHOSHANA & THE TEN PLAGUES
7:00 PM

SERIAL (BAD) WEDDINGS & SOME VACATION
7:00 PM
THE KIND WORDS
7:00 PM

THURSDAY 7
10% MY CHILD & BULMUS
6:00 PM
ONCE IN A LIFETIME
8:15 PM

SATURDAY 9
ROCK IN THE RED ZONE
9:00 PM

SUNDAY 10
RABIN IN HIS OWN WORDS
11:00 AM

LOOK AT US NOW, MOTHER
2:15 PM
SERIAL (BAD) WEDDINGS & SOME VACATION
2:15 PM

DOUGH
4:30 PM

EAST JERUSALEM, WEST JERUSALEM
4:30 PM

THE LAST MENTSCH
7:30 PM



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Transit Development

City, says the TCDA would enhance her town's development efforts. CTfastrak is on the verge of expanding its regular routes into the town and beyond.

"TOD projects are ideal for communities like East Hartford and will drive demand for housing, jobs and retail in our town," LeClerc said via email. "I have no concerns about the transit authority's impact on East Hartford specifically."

Other communities, such as West Hartford, with transit-oriented developments either



Sketch of West Hartford's proposed housing/retail development on New Park Avenue.

under way or planned, are ambivalent as to prospects for an agency whose aims would be similar to CRDA.

"I don't think it would be something we would

be interested in," West Hartford Town Manager Ron Van Winkle said of the proposed TOD agency. "It wouldn't make much of a difference."

West Hartford's two CTfastrak stations at the corner of New Park and Flatbush avenues, and at the intersection of New Park and New Britain avenues, have drawn development proposals, Van Winkle said.

Cumberland Farms is erecting a convenience store across from the New Park-Flatbush station; the town's housing authority bought a former Pontiac dealership on New Park Avenue, on which it proposes to erect affordable apartments in a building that also offers first-floor retail and office space. ■

The state will host a CTfastrak transit-oriented development open house at West Hartford's Elmwood Community Center on Mon., April 4, from 6 to 8 p.m.

HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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THURSDAY,
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**Awards Luncheon honoring
8 Remarkable Women in Business**

Time: 11:00am-1:45pm

Location: CT Convention Center, Hartford

This Spring, the Hartford Business Journal will recognize the achievements of 8 remarkable women who are making their mark in Greater Hartford. These women are senior-level executives, CEOs and/or entrepreneurs who have mastered their business. These are remarkable, noteworthy women who are admired in the business community.

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"Keys To Success"
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TOP STORY

OCC continues to press for public-private broadband models

The Office of Consumer Counsel's fledgling and controversial State Broadband Office isn't backing down from its push for deeper government involvement in facilitating the buildout of gigabit-speed Internet infrastructure.

The office, which has drawn the ire of telecom providers for its efforts, released a report last week recommending the state legislature to consider funding and tax incentives to support the buildout of last-mile connections to higher-speed broadband Internet, including fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) — which the report said is increasingly recognized as the “ultimate platform for communications networks.”

The Broadband Office also wants the legislature to create an infrastructure bank, akin to the Connecticut Green Bank, to provide lower-cost financing options for municipalities to buildout affordable, high-speed Internet in underserved areas. Cities and towns could lease network capacity to private carriers, raise property taxes in new service areas or employ other strategies to service that debt, the report said.

The telecom industry responded to the report's proposals arguing they would cost the state too much and likely lead to tax increases.

The report, “Opportunities for the State and Localities to Enable World-Class Broadband,” was prepared by OCC's consultant CTC Technology & Energy.

It argues that, while Connecticut businesses and residents are relatively well served by Internet providers, and that incremental FTTP deployments by Comcast and Frontier should be commended, gaps remain across the state, and that the state's Internet infrastructure confers no discernible competitive advantage with other states.

The report warned Connecticut could fall behind states like New York, which is investing \$500 million to ensure every resident there has access to high-speed service by late 2018. OCC would also like to copy New York City's WireScore program, which identifies buildings with robust broadband to help companies looking to locate or relocate to the region.

The legislature could also enact “dig-once” policies to ensure that cable and fiber are laid in the ground during construction projects, to lower the overall costs of installations, the report said.

Paul Cianelli, president and CEO of the New England Cable & Telecommunications Association, said the report confirms many concerns held by his industry group.

Cianelli contends that the report: Underestimates the construction costs of government-sponsored broadband networks; fails to recognize NECTA's contention that government shouldn't invest as much as \$3 billion on a network that is being built and upgraded as quickly as possible by the private sector; and that the proposed financing models would lead to higher taxes.

HEALTH CARE

CT coalition seeks more transparency on insurance mergers

Three community and professional organizations have joined together to request greater transparency and accountability of proposed health insurance mergers by the state Department of Insurance.

The coalition, which calls itself the Connecticut Campaign for Consumer Choice, is made up of the Universal Health Care Foundation of CT, Connecticut Citizen Action Group and Connecticut State Medical Society. It wants the insurance department to increase scrutiny and public input regarding major healthcare mergers.

The group said in a statement the proposed Anthem-Cigna and Aetna-Humana mergers are likely to have a negative impact on both the cost and quality of care in Connecticut.

The Anthem-Cigna merger is valued at \$54.2 billion and is expected to close in the second half of 2016, pending federal and state regulatory approvals.

The Aetna-Humana merger is valued at \$37 billion and requires the approval of 20 state insurance departments. Half had approved by last month. The deal still needs approval from Connecticut insurance regulators and the Department of Justice, which the insurer said may require it to divest certain businesses in some states.

ADVERTISING, MEDIA & MARKETING

Stanley Black & Decker to sponsor New Britain Bees

Stanley Black & Decker said it will continue to sponsor the home baseball team at New Britain Stadium, even though the players, league and team have all changed.

Stanley announced last week it will sponsor the New Britain Bees, which begins play in April.

The team moved in when the New Britain Rock Cats moved to become the Hartford Yard Goats and play in a new downtown Hartford stadium. Stanley Black & Decker had been a sponsor of the Rock Cats when the team played in their shared hometown.

The partnership includes premium signage and hospitality at the ballpark, promotional nights, on-field promotions, print advertisements, social media and presenting sponsor logo inclusion on all Bees marketing and promotional material.

EDUCATION

UConn moving ahead with Quiet Corner business initiative

Now that it has \$500,000 in federal support, the University of Connecticut is prepared to launch the first pilot program of its \$1.5 million Quiet Corner Innovation Cluster this summer.

The cluster will help develop companies in New London, Tolland and Windham counties — largely rural areas affected by the loss and stagnation of local manufacturers, many of which don't have the research and development capabilities to cope with rapid advances in technology.

Through the cluster, UConn will work with local companies to develop new products and update business opportunities for manufacturers in the eastern part of the state. It is the first UConn program aimed at partnering with small and medium-sized technological manufacturers. The innovation cluster is a partnership between UConn and Connecticut Innovations.

GOVERNMENT, POLITICS & LAW

Tax preparer legislation passes committee

The General Assembly's Government, Administration and Elections Committee has approved legislation requiring the licensing of tax preparers and facilitators.

The bill would create a State Board of Tax Practitioners, which would reside in the Secretary of the State's office. The board would oversee registration, licensure, continuing education, renewals, disclosures and enforcement for non-credentialed commercial tax preparers.

Each commercial tax return preparer will pay an annual fee of \$100 to the board to obtain a license. The proposed legislation also sets the required experience to be licensed as a commercial tax preparer.

Shipman & Goodwin adds NYC outpost

Shipman & Goodwin LLP, one of Connecticut's largest law firms with 180 attorneys, has opened an office in New York City. It is the Hartford firm's second location outside of Connecticut.

The Manhattan office is part of the firm's goal of expanding its presence in New York, said Alan E. Lieberman, managing partner of Shipman & Goodwin. He said the new office will enhance the firm's existing work for clients in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, bankruptcy, finance, litigation, tax and trusts and estates.

Shipman & Goodwin's newest office is at 400 Park Ave. in Manhattan. The firm's other locations are in Hartford, Stamford, Greenwich, New Haven and Lakeville, Conn., and in Washington D.C.

ECONOMY

CT has highest U.S. per-capita income

New figures released last week by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis show Connecticut had the highest per-capita income in the United States last year, but the growth rate still lagged the national average.

The state's 2015 per-capita income was \$66,972, 40.5 percent higher than the national average of \$47,669.

Connecticut's personal income grew 3.7 percent from 2014 to 2015, which represents a 39 percent improvement, according to the bureau's figures.

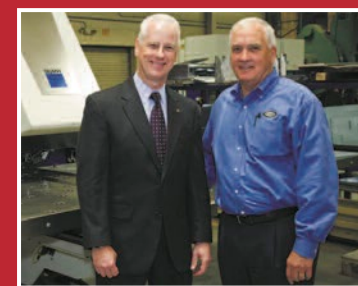
The strongest driver to Connecticut's personal income growth was in the construction sector, followed by finance and insurance, and professional, scientific and technical services sector. The durable goods manufacturing sector in Connecticut had the biggest downward trend in personal income.

Nationally, state personal income grew on average 4.4 percent in 2015, the same rate as in 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis said. State personal income growth ranged from -0.2 percent in North Dakota to 6.3 percent in California.

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Regs focus on tenant rights

One of the most recent approvals was also the most contentious.

In February, PURA greenlighted submetering at four apartment buildings owned by Philadelphia-based PMC Property Group, including Hartford's 55 Trumbull St., 915 Main St., and 41 Niles St., as well as 900 Chapel St. in New Haven.

The approval caps a years-long legal fight in which regulators clashed with PMC over the use of submetering in those properties before the practice was legal in Connecticut.

PMC has been submetering the three Hartford buildings since 2008 and the New Haven building since 2004, according to PURA. The company previously sought retroactive submetering approvals from PURA, but was denied, leading PMC and its contractor to file several lawsuits against the regulator.

Those suits have dragged on since, but PMC has agreed to withdraw them under the terms of a settlement it reached in late January with PURA's prosecutorial unit and the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC).

For its part, PURA agreed to terminate its submetering-related administrative proceedings against PMC and to not bring any enforcement actions for past unauthorized submetering by the landlord.

"It all took a very long time, but I think we all ended up in a good place," said PMC's Hartford attorney, Paul McCary. "I think PMC's very pleased that they can now go forward and submeter under rules that are approved by PURA and acknowledged by all the stakeholders to be appropriate."

OCC principal attorney Joseph Rosenthal said his agency thought the deal was in the best interests of tenant ratepayers.

"We thought the settlement provided a decent balance for tenants in that they are getting a robust set of protections, confirmation that the landlord will be dividing up his or her utility bill among tenants without a markup, plus a \$50 bill credit," Rosenthal said. "Moreover, OCC's agreement to the settlement did not waive the tenant's rights to pursue their own claims."

Consumer protections

Connecticut law — prior to a change in 2013 — had discouraged or banned submetering outright in most buildings, limiting its use to only campgrounds and marinas.

Consumer advocates have scrutinized submetering because it allows landlords to stand in as a sort of third-party utility company, creating the possibility for profit markups, inaccurate meter readings and other consumer abuses.

Landlord electricity markups, for example, were a controversial practice in New York City for decades, according to the New York Times, and there have been more recent controversies in other states, such as Ohio, where a 2013 investigation by The Columbus Dispatch found that third-party resellers were charging tenants more than they would have paid to a utility company.

PURA spokesman Michael Coyle said that sort of arrangement is forbidden in Connecticut and that his agency sought to address many concerns in the regulations it crafted over the past two years.

One key rule forbids a landlord from charging a higher electricity rate than a tenant would pay if they were a utility customer.

Landlords are also required to use submeters certified by the American National Standards Institute, to keep metering and other records for at least two years, and to provide metering records to PURA if requested.

Landlords must also test submeters at a tenant's request, and disclose to PURA how they will handle tenant complaints and concerns. Monthly bills to tenants are required to disclose when the submeter was read, how much power was used and the average rate applied to determine the bill.

Dennis Schain, spokesman for the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which advocated for submetering in its comprehensive energy strategy several years ago, said Connecticut's rules protect tenants and also incentivize them to consume less electricity.

"As part of the state's focus on providing a 21st-century approach to energy issues, we have addressed the issue of submetering in a positive way," Schain said.

Limited appeal

While submetering has a variety of benefits, it's unlikely to spread to all Connecticut apartment buildings.

For one, state law forbids properties with utility meters in all units — mainly the case in newer buildings — to convert to submetering. Scale brings greater benefits, so small buildings are less likely to submeter.

Submetering makes the most sense for owners of older apartment buildings, some of which used to be commercial buildings, such as PMC's 55 Trumbull St., which formerly belonged to the Southern New England Telephone Co.

Older or converted apartment buildings are often "master metered," meaning they have one utility meter to measure the whole building. Landlords of those properties typically charge tenants a flat utility fee, giving residents no incentive to turn off lights or moderate air conditioning or heating.

Why not just install more utility meters? "When you take a building that was wired for commercial use with one meter to serve the whole building, the cost of putting in utility metering is phenomenally expensive," said McCary, the PMC attorney. "It's hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Master metering can also hurt a landlord's competitiveness, because his property's power costs are often higher, which can mean higher rents in comparison to other properties, McCary said.

New avenue for renewables

Perhaps the most significant impact of Connecticut's recent submetering rules is that they make it feasible for landlords to install fuel cells and solar panels and sell the power output to tenants.

That creates a more compelling business case for investing in renewables.

Previously, landlords who installed renewable generation could use it only in common areas like hallways and community rooms. Now, they can sell that power to their

Submetering Growth

These Connecticut apartment buildings have received approval to use submetering.

Address	Apt. Units	Submetering Approved by PURA
55 Trumbull St., Hartford	149	2/19/2016
915 Main St., Hartford	109	2/19/2016
41 Niles St., Hartford	41	2/19/2016
900 Chapel St., New Haven	104	2/19/2016
360 State St., New Haven	500	12/2/2015
777 Main St., Hartford	285	7/1/2015
676 Mix Ave., Hamden	498	6/11/2015
205 Church St., New Haven	146	5/6/2015

Total 1,832

SOURCE: PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

apartment tenants.

The face of renewable submetering in Connecticut for the past six-plus years has been Bruce Becker, an architect who redeveloped Hartford's 777 Main St. (the former Bank of America tower) and 360 State St. in New Haven, which received submetering approval in December. Each building has a 400-kilowatt fuel cell made by South Windsor's Doosan.

Becker said 777 Main's fuel cell began operating last year, and has a 15-year contract under the state's Low-Emission Renewable Energy Credit program to sell credits generated by the fuel cell to Eversource. 777 Main can also sell excess electricity back into the grid through the state's net-metering program.

It's these types of state incentives that will help Becker shorten the payoff period for his investment in the fuel cell, which is attached to a combined-heat-and-power system that provides heat and hot water in the 26-story tower.

"Now that [the regulations are in place], it's in every landlord's interest to consider on-site generation and renewable energy for multi-family housing properties because now they can recover and help pay for their investment," Becker said.

Becker said he expects additional incentives when he installs solar panels at the Hartford property in the coming months.

He said submetering isn't guaranteed to earn a return for a landlord who invests in renewables. The more units an apartment building has, the better, and financing terms are also crucial, he said.

Becker has 40-year financing on his Hartford fuel cell with 4.5 percent interest.

"I think the [return] on the renewable investment will be greater than that," he said.

Meanwhile, submetering is also a common practice in commercial leases, but they too now require PURA approval, said OCC's Rosenthal. Hartford's Marriott Residence Inn recently applied and was approved to add two submeters inside the hotel's commercial space. Rosenthal said he hopes to see many more applications to PURA soon.

"It is our understanding that submetering is widespread in commercial buildings," he said. "However, it is not legal unless authorized by PURA, so we encourage commercial as well as residential landlords to obtain authorizations."



Daily fantasy sports websites like DraftKings may soon be authorized and regulated in Connecticut.

Fantasy sports bill could bring millions in state revenue

Legislation that seeks to officially authorize daily fantasy sports websites already operating in Connecticut and many other states has the potential to bring in as much as \$7 million in state revenue, according to the co-chair of the committee that raised the bill.

Rep. David Baram (D-Bloomfield) cited the figure in an interview last week about Senate Bill 192, which was raised last month by the Joint Committee on General Law, which Baram co-chairs.

"Right now they are operating without any regulation," Baram said of websites like FanDuel and DraftKings. "It's happening and it's nationwide."

The latest version of the bill states that daily fantasy sports (DFS) websites are not considered gambling. Lawmakers also lowered the minimum playing age from 21 to 18, and created a first-time \$50,000 registration fee for DFS operators, with annual renewal fees of up to \$10,000.

Now, the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee is weighing additional revenue-raising measures, Baram said, which could include a per-transaction fee similar to a "rake" in a poker game or taxes on winnings.

Fantasy sports games allow users to build teams of professional athletes and compete against others based on the athletes' statistical performances.

The Boston Globe reported that FanDuel and DraftKings said they expected to pay out a total of \$3 billion in cash prizes in 2015.

But the sites don't want to be considered gambling. The federal Unlawful Internet Gambling Act of 2006, which struck a deep blow to Internet poker companies and made it illegal for U.S. financial institutions to knowingly handle Internet gambling-related funds, contained a carve-out provision for fantasy sports.

Baram said the General Law Committee discussed with DFS representatives the vital question of whether the games are gambling or games of skill.

He said he was convinced DFS is a game of skill.

"Here, you're actually researching it and you're combining players on teams," he said. "It was fairly convincing that this was much more than buying a lottery ticket."

However, he concedes that some may disagree, including the state's two casino-operating tribes.

"There is tremendous concern by the state that if we regulate and legalize fantasy sports that it not violate the compacts" between the state and the casinos, Baram said. Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods pay 25 percent of their slots revenues to the state, which brought in \$268 million in fiscal year 2015.

"Nobody wants to jeopardize that," Baram said.

Earlier this month, Virginia became the first state to legalize fantasy sports. A number of other states are considering similar proposals.

— Matt Pilon



Hands On Hartford Center for Community, 55 Bartholomew Ave.

Hands On Hartford's \$6.5M community space debuts

Nonprofit Hands On Hartford has opened its \$6.5 million Hands On Hartford Center for Community in the city's Parkville neighborhood.

Thirteen second-floor apartments are part of the 22,197-square-foot first phase at 55 Bartholomew Ave., formerly site of the Spaghetti Warehouse Restaurant, in the Parkville Neighborhood Revitalization Zone.

The center also includes refurbished commercial kitchen and café space, a food pantry, a volunteer action center and meeting space, said Hands on Hartford Executive Director Barbara Shaw.

Thirty additional living units are set for the next phase, Shaw said.

The restoration preserved and repurposed two historic buildings in the Parkville neighborhood, both of which are listed on the state and federal registers of historic places. 55 Bartholomew was originally part of the Hartford Rubber Works Co., later the home of Champlin Box Co. and Spaghetti Warehouse, and more recently, Trout Brook Brewhouse.

Hartford's Crosskey Architects LLC was the designer. Naek Construction Co. Inc. was general contractor.

Construction on the second building is expected to start later this year, finishing in 2017. Development cost for the second building is not yet final, officials said.

\$1.8M Hamden acreage sale

The former Centerville Lumber properties, the last available large development parcel in Hamden, sold recently for \$1.8 million, brokers say.

The estate of Oscar Roos and Centerville Lumber Inc. sold the 5.5-acre site to Jordan Properties LLC, according to listing broker Press/Cuozzo Realtors.

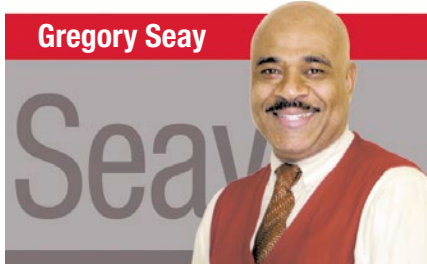
Located on Whitney Avenue near the intersection of Dixwell Avenue, the site has a pair of commercial buildings that will be reincorporated into a new development planned for the grounds.

Coldwell Banker's W. Hfd. relo

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage plans early this summer to relocate its West Hartford sales office around the corner, into more visible space in the town's center.

Coldwell Banker, with operations in Connecticut and Westchester County, N.Y., said it will relocate its 65-person staff housed now at 36 LaSalle Road to the nearly 7,000-square-foot former Chico's fashion store at 992 Farmington Ave., at the corner of Dale Street. Both locations

Gregory Seay



are in the center of town.

S.B. Andrews Co. LLC is landlord for the Farmington Avenue space, which officials say will have state-of-the-art equipment and amenities, including high-definition TV monitors and high-speed wireless Internet for office operations and customer support.

Sentry Commercial represented Coldwell Banker in lease talks. RLM Co. represented the landlord.

Bernina's Glastonbury relo



Close To Home Sewing Machine Center, 277 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury.

Swiss sewing-machine maker Bernina of America says its only authorized Connecticut dealer has relocated its Glastonbury store to new quarters in town.

The dealer, Close To Home Sewing Machine Center, is now housed at its 6,000-square-foot location at 277 Hebron Ave. Pelletier Builders was general contractor for the building that FLB Architects designed.

The store previously was housed in 5,700 square feet at 2717 Main St. Close To Home has two other stores in Southington and Orange.

Close To Home co-owners Ray and Marilyn Gattinella said their new Glastonbury location provides more space for showcasing Bernina's machines, software, accessories and fabrics; space for machine repairs; a sewing classroom; and a home-decorating center featuring custom home goods.

Bernina of America says it has 19 authorized New England dealers.

Deal Watch wants to hear from you. E-mail it, along with contact information to: gseay@HartfordBusiness.com. Gregory Seay is the Hartford Business Journal's News Editor.

SPOTLIGHT ON: INDUSTRIAL



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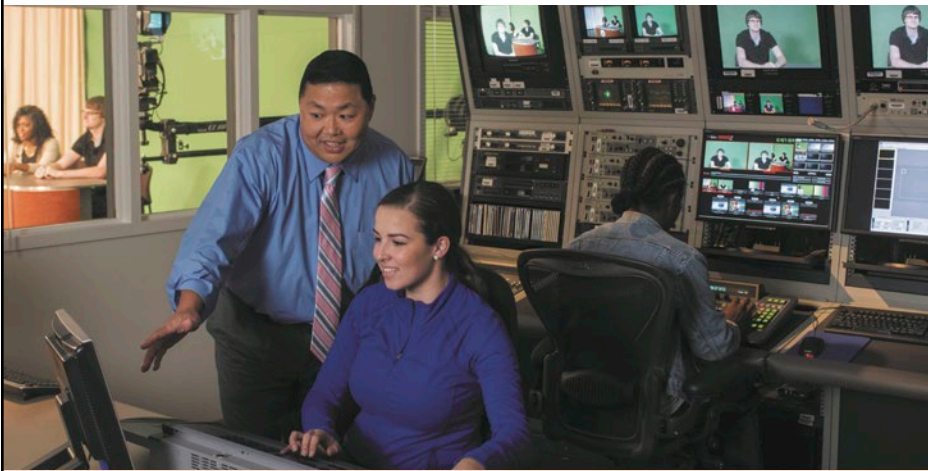
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EDITORIAL

Let Hartford keep admissions tax revenues

A proposal has resurfaced at the General Assembly that would divert to the city of Hartford state admissions tax revenues generated by Dunkin' Donuts Park. The city would use those funds to help pay down the debt incurred for building the minor-league baseball stadium, which is set to debut May 31.

Opposition to the proposal, which was pitched last year but failed to gain traction, has come from residents around the state, Republican legislators and others. We understand how the diversion of any state revenues to support athletic teams/stadiums might be offensive to the public, particularly as funding for many state programs is likely to be axed in the weeks ahead.

However, we support this proposal and think Hartford should receive the revenues generated by its own development.

While we've been opposed to, or skeptical of, many state subsidies to private enterprises, this measure doesn't quite fit that bill. The admissions tax revenues — spawned by a 10 percent tax on tickets — will be generated by the stadium itself; the city is simply asking to keep that money instead of sending it to the state.

Last year it was estimated Hartford could receive around \$426,000 annually from the admissions tax to offset the cost of constructing the stadium, which will force the city to make millions of dollars in annual debt-service payments. Those extra funds will help shield Hartford taxpayers, particularly businesses, which already shoulder the highest tax burden in Connecticut and could face even higher costs as the city deals with its own structural budget deficits.

Additionally, the XL Center and Webster Arena in Bridgeport are already exempt from the state admissions tax, so there is precedent in creating some leeway. There is no sound logic behind the current inequity in the law; all sports venues should be treated the same.

Therefore, we also think the city of New Britain should be allowed to keep admissions tax revenues from its minor-league stadium, which will be hosting the New Britain Bees this summer.

Frankly, a better model would be for the state to eliminate the admissions tax altogether and give municipalities the ability to levy it, particularly if the state didn't help fund the venue's development. It would be an easier way for cities in particular to get more revenue without having to increase property taxes.

In written testimony, Republican Sen. Minority Leader Len Fasano opposed the bill, arguing promises were made that the state wouldn't help pay for the Hartford baseball stadium. He said diverting the admissions tax revenue would break that promise. But that's not entirely true.

Hartford is not asking for the state for a bond allocation to help underwrite the stadium's construction costs. Indeed, even when the project went over budget by \$10 million, Mayor Luke Bronin agreed to have city taxpayers — not the state — shoulder about a third of that cost overrun. The team and stadium developer shouldered the rest of the burden, and rightfully so.

Opening Day is around the corner and there is still as much uncertainty and angst surrounding the stadium as there was a year ago. The Yard Goats' (formerly the New Britain Rock Cats) move to Hartford from the Hardware City was controversial and rubbed many people the wrong way.

The fact that the team's stadium will likely add to the city's deficit for at least the next few years is unconscionable in many ways.

But the stadium is here to stay, and will add a new sense of vibrancy to downtown. We should all hope it succeeds because if it doesn't, admissions tax revenues will be the least of Hartford's concerns. ■

OTHER VOICES

Collaboration key to solving community problems

By Ted Carroll

Our democracy is in trouble. We know that there are times in our local communities, and increasing examples at the national level, when gridlock sets in. As is painfully obvious in our national presidential campaigns, we do not always appreciate, respect or even listen to another's perspective. We seem more interested in proving that our positions are right than in finding mutually agreeable solutions to our problems. We seem to forget how essential it is to find common ground. Long after elections are settled, we are still engaged in what has been termed "hyper-partisanship."



Ted Carroll

So what can we do to change this? How do we engage in respectful, inclusive and collaborative conversations, at least at the local level? For the past 40 years Leadership Greater Hartford (LGH) has been at the helm of bringing people together from different parts of the community, to foster their leadership skills, and help them apply those skills to tackle these tough civic and civil challenges.

There is a growing understanding, among our 6,000 program graduates and other leaders of area business, government and nonprofit organizations, that Greater Hartford is ONE region. We rise and fall together. And the better we are at recognizing our shared interests and in forging common solutions, the stronger we become.

In recent years, the region has seen countless examples of effective collaboration. Within the past several years alone, LGH has collaborated with the Hartford Police Department to hold tough conversations about community policing — involving citizens in discussions with police officials to build the awareness and mutual trust needed to create constructive partnerships and to avoid the social unrest

experienced in other communities.

When the city was entertaining a proposal to build a baseball stadium two years ago, LGH mediated a forum that allowed disparate voices to listen to each other to ensure that the public investment was affordable and would spur greater economic development benefits to Hartford's downtown north neighborhood.

LGH is proud of our partnership with hundreds of Hartford stakeholders who were engaged six years ago to create "One City/One Plan," a guide still used to advance the city's top priorities. When the Hartford Public Schools initiated school governance councils to bring together parents, teachers, community members and school principals to help them share essential decision-making for their schools, LGH was asked to provide the support and training to help these councils work together effectively, a role we continue to play.

And right now LGH is front and center in partnering on an unprecedented civic initiative, Hartford Decide\$, where thousands of city residents, 14 years and older, are making decisions about how to spend \$1.25 million on community development projects they have determined will improve life in their city.

The net result of these and other collaborative efforts is that our communities are healthier and more inclusive. As a consequence of engaging multiple parties, we're making better decisions in our public safety, education and overall planning efforts — and those decisions are getting broader support. Mutual trust, respect and understanding — essential ingredients for any democracy — are on the rise.

Unlike the many physical changes being made along our riverfront or to our skyline, however, improvements to the civic culture may not be readily visible to the eye. Still, they contribute mightily to the ability of our communities to solve problems and to chart a future course that reflects the best thinking and interests of all. ■

Ted Carroll is the president of Leadership Greater Hartford.

► ... Greater Hartford is ONE region. We rise and fall together. And the better we are at recognizing our shared interests and in forging common solutions, the stronger we become.

HARTFORDBUSINESS.COM POLL

Should municipalities or the state receive event admissions tax revenues?

- ☐ State
- ☐ Municipalities
- ☐ Neither — Eliminate the tax

To vote, go online to HartfordBusiness.com.

Last week's poll results:

Should Hartford ask the city's largest nonprofits for PILOT contributions?

56.7% Yes
43.3% No

Send Us Your Letters

The Hartford Business Journal welcomes letters to the editor and guest commentaries for our opinion pages. Electronic submissions are preferred and welcome at: editor@HartfordBusiness.com. Or you may fax submissions to Editor, Hartford Business Journal, at (860) 570-2493.

HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

Best Places

TO WORK IN **CT** 2016

SPECIAL SECTION
PGS. 10-30

**Teamwork makes
the dream work!**

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Keys to creating a Best Places work environment

What does it take to be a Best Places to Work in Connecticut? There's no single standard.

It takes an organization that is not only successful in growing its business and satisfying customers, but also grooming its workforce.

It's a company that invests in its employees, not only offering competitive pay and benefits, but a roadmap to future growth and a work environment that promotes collaboration and even fun.

Let's face it, the day-to-day grind of the working world can be challenging and sometimes even mundane, but it is the companies that are able to consistently motivate their workers — and maintain employee loyalty — that are able to get ahead and retain and attract top talent.

Hartford Business Journal's 2016 Best Places to Work are a hodgepodge of technology companies, marketing firms, nonprofits, law and

engineering firms, financial service companies, etc.

While they all compete in different industries they each have created work environments that promote productivity, enthusiasm and even levity.

Whether it's offering weekly, monthly or annual bonuses or recognitions, work-life balance flexibility, continuing-education incentives, fun social gatherings, or even a place for employees to exercise, these companies know how to engender positive feelings from their workers.

As you read their profiles in the pages that follow, think about how your company can incorporate some of their tactics to improve the workplace environment.

Because at the end of the day the most important asset any company can invest in, is its people.

— Greg Bordonaro, Editor

HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

Best Places
TO WORK IN CT 2016

Ranked #1

LARGE
COMPANY
CATEGORY
page 12

The List:

LARGE
COMPANY
CATEGORY
page 22

Ranked #1

SMALL / MEDIUM
COMPANY
CATEGORY
page 13

The List:

SMALL / MEDIUM
COMPANY
CATEGORY
page 29

Best Places
TO WORK IN CT

How the ranking process works:

Now in its eleventh year, the Best Places to Work in Connecticut program was created by the Hartford Business Journal and Best Companies Group to identify and recognize best places to work in the state of Connecticut. The program is managed by Best Companies Group, a third-party research firm that manages similar programs all over the United States and in Canada.

The Best Places to Work in Connecticut program was open to all public or privately-held organizations, either for-profit or not-for-profit. To be eligible for consideration, companies must have had a total of 15 or more employees working in the state of Connecticut. Companies with headquarters in another state, but with 15 or more employees working in Connecticut, were also eligible. Participation in this program required organizations to go through a workplace assessment process, which

included surveying their employees, as well as taking an inventory of the company benefits, policies and offerings. The information was processed and analyzed by Best Companies Group and then used to determine the Best Places to Work in Connecticut.

All participating companies went through a two-part workplace assessment process. Part one of the assessment (worth 25 percent of the evaluation) consisted of an employer questionnaire about benefits, policies, practices, and other general information. Part two of the assessment (75 percent of the evaluation) consisted of a 72-question, confidential employee engagement and satisfaction survey. This comprehensive, two-part assessment allowed the workplace experts at Best Companies Group to perform an in-depth analysis of each company's strengths and weaknesses and ultimately determine which companies deserved to

make the list. Susan Springer, Best Companies Group Director of Workplace Assessments, managed the overall analysis process.

Companies received the in-depth employee feedback report, which showed the percent of positive responses for each of the 72 questions, along with the percent of positive responses within seven demographic categories (gender, age, ethnicity, duration of employment, full- or part-time status, job role, and department). Companies received state benchmarking reports in which they could compare themselves against list-making companies and all participating companies.

More information about Best Companies Group is available at www.BestCompaniesGroup.com. Information on the Best Places to Work in Connecticut program can be found at www.bestplaces-toworkinct.com.

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Edward Jones opens door to those eager for independence



Edward Jones associates and families (shown above left and bottom right) frequently participate in community events, like the annual Alzheimer's Walk in Enfield. Summer regional meetings for Edward Jones financial advisors (shown above top right) are a mix of fun and business over three days.

By Karen Sackowitz

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

When Karen Leonard decided to become a financial advisor, she wanted to make sure she had a complete understanding of the investment world from the basics up.

Investment advisory firm Edward Jones & Co. offered Leonard that — and more.

"It was important to my career path that I had all of the skills I needed to do well, so I started as a branch office administrator in January 2002," she said of her early days with Edward Jones. "At the same time, I was able to use the company's tuition reimbursement program to go to college part-time for my bachelor's degree."

Leonard says the company's flexible work schedule was essential to her earning her degree, while several mentors along the way encouraged her growth and transition within the firm. In 2007, she achieved limited partner status, and in 2008 she opened her own branch office at 2 Bridge St. in New Hartford.

Leonard's story is not uncommon at financial services firm Edward Jones, where promoting from within and providing the tools to succeed are the keys to the company's recruiting and branch expansion.

"We have 65 branches and 140 associates in Connecticut," says Jeff Burdick, Edward Jones regional leader. "Our goal is to open 50 more branch offices in the greater Hartford area."

Burdick says the company's expansion plans offer an open door to those whose career arcs were disrupted amid shifts in the state's economic makeup.

"There is a lot of talk about companies in Greater Hartford leaving the area," he said. "We value those who are left behind — those who have valuable work experience but who may not have wanted to relocate with their former company."

Burdick adds that those same workers can benefit from a shift out of the traditional corporate culture toward a more independent setup.

"We are unique in that we are a limited partnership. Once an employee has been with us for three or four years, they are invited to be an owner by buying into the company through shares," he said. "Over time, that capital grows and can help with retirement, additional income or however they want to use it."

To help newcomers, Edward Jones matches each with a trainer and a mentor in their local marketplace. By offering business support, combined with flexible working hours and latitude for working parents, Burdick says Edward Jones sets everyone up for success.

"We want our people to build their business, and to be successful in their communities," he says. "So we aim to make new people successful in an effective way, as quickly as possible."

"It's incredible to get to choose where your office will be," says Leonard. "I love working within the community where I live because it allows me to be connected to the people I serve."

Adding to the work-life balance is the opportunity for Edward Jones staffers to participate in community service programs, with their employer's full support.

"Our associates invest extensively in boards, Rotary Clubs, and other organizations, to give back to the communities in

which we work and live," Burdick says. "While there are some group-wide charity efforts, individual branches can decide where they want to put their community involvement efforts."

When it comes to hiring new associates, Edward Jones prides itself on pulling from a wide variety of backgrounds, Burdick said.

"We've had advisors come on board who were teachers, workers in the insurance agency, or even right out of college," he says. "We will bring on anyone who has demonstrated a history of exceptional work experience, regardless of age or background."

Edward Jones has also made extra efforts to accommodate women leaders.

"Ours has traditionally been a very male-dominated business, and we are working to change that," Burdick says. "Women like to do business with other women, and this is a huge opportunity for women to build a business within the firm."

Leonard concurs.

"When I started here 14 years ago, there were two financial advisors who were women, and now there are so many," says Leonard. "Edward Jones offers so much support to women, and they see the opportunity to connect in a way that makes our female clients comfortable."

Reaching out to any age or background, promoting female leadership and giving every employee the tools needed to succeed is the Edward Jones way.

"Internally, we take a collaborative approach rather than a competitive one," Burdick says. "There is a high level of opportunity in the industry and we want all of our people to succeed." ■

► **'It's incredible to get to choose where your office will be. I love working within the community where I live because it allows me to be connected to the people I serve.'**

Karen Leonard, Edward Jones financial adviser

Fulfilling, nurturing SMC sows results for clients

By John Stearns

jstearns@HartfordBusiness.com

Patty Matthews is grateful to work at Hartford-based SMC Partners LLC.

"I always say I feel like I won the lottery when I joined," said Matthews, marketing and human resources manager, who's been at SMC about 3 1/2 years. "I really do think it is the best place to work. I feel so fortunate every day that I have a job like this."

It's no wonder that SMC finished No. 1 in the Hartford Business Journal's "Best Places to Work in CT" small/medium company category after finishing No. 2 last year and No. 3 the year before that.

SMC bills itself as an information technology, business process, and human performance consulting company focused on health care, health insurance, and social services. It helps clients improve the quality of their services and grow their enterprises by designing, building and operating new administrative and care delivery capabilities and information technology applications, according to SMC's website.

Its work has included setting up insurers' claims system, helping primary care doctors use their electronic health records, working with social service groups to make their systems and processes more efficient, and setting up healthcare-related mobile applications.

For SMC employees, the positive reinforcement, teamwork, benefits, company culture, learning environment, and more, all contribute to a fulfilling environment.

Among SMC's benefits are unlimited sick time, employer-paid health plan, a \$1,250 annual contribution to the employee's health savings account, four weeks' paid vacation to start, bonuses and profit-sharing, wellness challenges, flexible work hours, lunchtime yoga, company-paid registrations for out-of-office events like races in which the company participates, and mentoring and teaching programs. SMC also surveys its employees frequently for needs and suggestions and tailors programs appropriately.

Outside the office, SMC's community engagement includes donating case management software and professional services to help Community Solutions address the health and social needs in Hartford's North End; assisting nonprofit Chrysalis Center, which helps veterans, the homeless and those with substance-abuse issues, and doing food and gift drives for the center; and volunteering teachers and education content, and offering internships for students at Tech Foundry, a Springfield nonprofit helping that area's high school graduates enter the technology workforce.

SMC started in 2007 and has 43 employees. It's headed by Scott Cleary, who as co-founder, president and chief servant sets the tone for the company, Matthews said.

"We really do live our molecule," she said referencing the company logo featuring four overlapping circles meant to represent nurtured families, fulfilled teammates, successful clients and servant leaders.

SMC owners Cleary and his wife, Jo, live that and it trickles down to everyone else, Matthews said.

The company is comprised of analysts, consultants, managers and directors on the



SMC Partners participated in an Empower Leadership Adventure Day (above top photo). After a BBQ lunch, teams worked together in a scavenger hunt and obstacle course. A group of SMC employees volunteered at the Special Olympics summer games. At the end of a month-long wellness challenge, SMC employees celebrated their success with a bowling party.

business-process side and the technology side, she said.

Jeremy Klein, a senior technical analyst at SMC, joined the company about 1 1/2 years ago as a business analyst. SMC has been a great place to work in his first job out of college and appreciates the mentoring he's received along the way.

"I found that SMC's really been supportive," he said, citing mentors who have helped him in his new role.

"Everyone there is very supportive in asking for questions and trying to show us how to make sure that we're understanding everything that we're doing and just becoming better at what we do," he said.

"... SMC has been great ... teaching me how to be professional and work in a professional work environment as well as growing my skills and just growing as a person as well."

Matthews said each employee has a career counselor, which is like a formal mentoring program. Mentors meet with their counselees monthly, she said.

"They want to make sure that the employee or their counselee is happy, they're moving along their career path the way they want to," Matthews said. And for employees who may be at client sites for long periods, it's a way to keep connected. "So we just need to make sure that we keep in touch and make sure that everybody's getting what they need to be successful."

Steve Ruth, a director and six-year SMC staffer, said the company wants to ensure employees are fully nurtured.

He said Cleary treats people like family, which people appreciate.

Ruth also is impressed by the company's transparency, from the top down, from financial data to client prospects and more.

"We know a lot about the inner workings of really what goes on," he said. "For some of the younger people, I think it gives a good idea of what it takes to run a business, to some extent."

It's an openness not seen in a lot of organizations, Ruth said, but which contributes to employee loyalty and trust. ■

► **'I always say I feel like I won the lottery when I joined. ... I feel so fortunate every day that I have a job like this.'**

Patty Matthews, SMC marketing and human resources manager

Small acts, big investments drive Hinckley staff satisfaction

By Matthew Broderick

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

When Meg DeLeo, an office administrator at Hinckley Allen, joined the Hartford law firm last July, she



Hinckley Allen staff take in a ball game.

noticed similarities to other firms where she's worked: good benefits, hard work and a strong client focus.

Since then, DeLeo says she has come to appreciate the subtle differences that make her new employer special to her.

"The managing partner sends frequent emails, mostly a thank you message to employees," DeLeo said. "He's the top person in the firm and is very busy, but it's the [positive tone] of the message [that I like]."

For the 60 employees of the firm's Hartford office, which opened in 2008, it is those little things — alongside a culture that promotes empowerment, skill development and collaboration — that has fueled employee satisfaction and loyalty.

David Rubin, the managing partner of the firm's Hartford office — one of six northeast-based regional offices — said he understands that making employees feel valued drives a positive workplace culture.

"Our senior management is strongly invested in creating and maintaining the Hinckley Allen culture," Rubin said, noting the firm's partners regularly solicit feedback from employees to make improvements. "We truly listen to what they have to say; we embody the

behaviors and attributes we believe to be at the core of our firm," Rubin said.

Jean McCarthy, a legal secretary who's been with Hinckley since 2008, says she feels empowered at the firm to discuss any issues or suggestions. "I've never felt that what I had to say didn't matter or was irrelevant," she said.

McCarthy points to the firm's staff committee, which she has served on, as an example of that empowerment. The committee, comprised of all levels of employees, coordinates the firm's charity and volunteer events.

In addition to helping build internal workplace relationships, committee members also volunteered on community projects including at a local soup kitchen, cleaning up a park, supplying kids with backpacks, and providing Thanksgiving meals for disadvantaged families.

For Rubin, providing opportunities to balance work and outside activities — like volunteering — is an area where his firm excels.

"In the practice of law, it isn't unusual for firms to pile on the work and expect employees to toil long and hard," he said, "but we recognize the need for a quality life that includes time to enjoy family and participate in outside activities that fulfill us as people."

Equally important to Rubin is his firm's investment in skill development.

"We choose our employees carefully and are dedicated to employee development to help our people be successful in their work," he said, noting the firm offers a range of opportunities from formal education and outside seminars to membership in relevant associations and internal mentorship.

As a result, Rubin explained, a number of attorneys and staff have been with the firm from 20 to 40 years.

But success is not all the firm celebrates, according to DeLeo. "We have a birthday celebration with cake for all [employees in the office]," she said, explaining that firm-wide social gatherings — like a monthly lunch courtesy of the firm — foster better working relationships with co-workers.

"It's an opportunity for everyone to gather together," DeLeo said. "And when you know each other better, you work better together."

McCarthy agrees. "The best part of being at Hinckley Allen is the working relationship I have with the attorneys I work for," she said. "It's more of a partnership than a supervisor and subordinate; I am respected as a valuable member of the team."





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Event Schedule

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Presenters: 10:15 am – 12:00 pm

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Bar opens at 12:00 pm

Presenters: 1:30 – 4:00 pm

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At FIA, possibilities explored over a cup of joe



FIA employees and their families participate in the Color Me Rad race.

By Karen Sakowitz

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

To find out what makes Windsor-based Fiduciary Investment Advisors an ideal workplace, talk to any member of the core leadership team, all of whom have been with the company between 18 and 20 years.

Or, ask any new employee who has been

advise on more than \$43 billion of fiduciary assets for more than 300 clients. During its growth, FIA officials say the company has had no turnover at the senior-consultant level, and has managed to maintain a collaborative atmosphere — a major key to its success.

"I have an open-door policy. The thinking is that everyone is here for a reason," said Wetzel, who invites all staffers to sign up for "Coffee with

given uninterrupted time with the company's president, Mark Wetzel. Other testimonials might come from staffers who have benefitted from the company's internal learning institutes, or who have rolled up their sleeves to take part in FIA's community service efforts.

Wetzel began to grow his team in 1990, formally incorporating in 2006. Today, the firm has 53 employees who

the President" sessions that are available several times a week.

"We pay our people for their ideas," he said. "We want them to add value to the firm and to our clients. Diversity of thought and opinion is valuable to us."

He also sits with each new employee when they start. Wetzel says younger employees often take advantage of their face time with him to discuss career opportunities and chances for advancement within the firm.

Recognition is another key part of employee support at FIA. Whether it's a restaurant gift certificate on an employee's work anniversary, or promotions publicized in the company newsletter, no special event goes unnoticed.

"In our Monday morning staff meetings, employees receive recognition for accomplishments in an open forum," said Maureen Cooper, the firm's chief operating officer. "We also have an annual off-site where we go over the whole business, including a recap of the year and goals for the next year, so that everyone knows where we are. Ours are very contributory meetings."

FIA employees are also invited to formally share information that can help their coworkers.

"We hold learning institutes every two to three weeks, where a person from a particular

department gives a 45-minute presentation. Attendees can listen, ask questions, and soak in knowledge along the way," Cooper said.

"Topics have included capital-markets review, asset allocation, spending policies for nonprofits, retirement savings, and more."

Sharing ideas and learning from others are qualities that extend beyond the walls of FIA as well. Employees are encouraged to sit on boards of community nonprofits. Staffers are also invited to participate in the FIA's many community service projects.

"We have a community-service committee which picks our charities. We intentionally choose those that let us get involved in an active way — serving food, things like that — which makes it more personal and meaningful," said Wetzel. "For example, we deliver food to Hands on Hartford every month, and it's so impactful to see how important the effort is to those we help."

Cooper says the growth of the committee shows how much employees want to be involved. "We had about 20 people on our community service committee to start," Cooper said. "Now, you walk by a committee meeting and it fills the conference room. Everyone enjoys it so much."



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Shawmut partners seek to balance selves, others

By Karen Sackowitz

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

Employees at the North Haven offices of Shawmut Design and Construction have a good reason to put their all into the work they do. They own the company.

In addition to yearly and spot-performance bonuses, every staff member can enroll in Shawmut's Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP) after they have been with the company for one year. An ESOP provides workers with an ownership stake, usually in the form of stock.

At Shawmut, that translates into annual contributions of company shares to a personal retirement account. Those shares can average 12 percent of their annual salary, over and above 401(k) contributions. To date, 54 of Shawmut's Connecticut staff are ESOP participants.

To bring in the best and brightest employee-owners, Shawmut runs a construction management skills training program for recent engineering graduates looking to enter the construction industry.

According to Ken Proscino, director of the company's Connecticut office, most participants

in the program come with a four-year degree in some sort of engineering. Trainees go through a rigorous 36-month curriculum with rotations through project management, site supervision and estimating, paired with leadership development curriculum.

"The training is extremely beneficial in that you become a more well-rounded employee, which helps tremendously with career development," said Josh Walker, a project manager who has been with Shawmut for eight years. "You spend one year learning each area of specialty before choosing a path, so you have a good understanding of how each of the groups interact on a project."

Shawmut employees also are encouraged to participate in any one of the company's

various community-service projects.

"We work very hard on those efforts. Our main goal is giving back to the community," says Proscino. "We choose four or five efforts and stick with them through the year."

In 2015, those efforts went toward the Ronald



Shawmut employees volunteering at Habitat for Humanity during National Women Build Week.



McDonald House in New Haven, Hamden-based Special Olympics of Connecticut, Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, and the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in New Haven. Proscino says the impact of their hands-on work in the community is invaluable.

"Volunteering gives us a sense of community and of helping others," Walker said.

In addition to serving clients with collaborative pre- and post-construction services, virtual construction capabilities and safety practices, Shawmut also prioritizes green building practices. Internally, this dedication has translated into the formation of a green-building committee whose members have instituted office recycling and indoor air quality management.

Proscino says the firm has also created a new initiative focused on work-life balance.

Through the new program, staffers can create flexible arrangements to work from home, alternate work days, or switch hours in an effort to enjoy a life outside of work and reach that balance between dedication in the office and family or activity time.

"The option of a flexible schedule is a huge benefit," said Walker. "I've been able to come in late and stay late, or to work from home if that's how I am more productive."

Thank you to everyone who supported the 11th Annual Greater Hartford Go Red For Women Luncheon!



Go Red For Women is nationally sponsored by



Thank you to our 2016 Greater Hartford Go Red For Women Luncheon Chair, Jill Hummel



President, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Make a Change at GoRedForWomen.org

Flexible culture fuels VLink's Growth

By Matthew Broderick

Special to the Hartford Business Journal

When VLink CEO Sharad Patney thinks about his Windsor information-technology company's annual goals, he starts with an unconventional priority: Employee happiness.

"If our employees are happy, we are positioned to grow," Patney said.

The formula seems to be working. Since its founding in 2006, VLink, whose services include enterprise architecture, application development, cloud services and data analytics, has grown from 40 employees to more than 180, while expanding its largely New England clientele to more than 100 companies and generating revenue of more than \$20 million in 2015.

VLink's corporate culture, Patney said, is employee focused. That has meant creating a culture where employees share their challenges and opinions, regardless of their title.

"I take the view that everyone is on an equal platform," Patney said. "Even as senior leaders, we are still learning, so everyone [at all levels] needs to share to succeed."

It's an approach that VLink employees like Patrick Pathammavong appreciate.

"It's not just company growth, but personal growth too," said Pathammavong, a recruiting manager who joined the company a year and a half ago. "Our company growth has also included expanding [employee] responsibilities and exploring different avenues of the business with [company leaders] cheering us on and coaching us to blossom."

One of the most valuable aspects of VLink's culture, Pathammavong said, is the workplace flexibility.

"The company really respects work-life balance," he said, noting VLink's work from home policy is an important part of his job satisfaction. "If you have something that important you need to do or somewhere you need to be," Pathammavong explained, "VLink is very understanding; there's no disciplinary action or guilt cast on you."



VLink employees participate in tug-of-war at a summer picnic.

Patney said VLink's home-office employees are encouraged to work from home and don't need to request permission.

Meantime, despite the company's geographic diversity (it has client locations in 25 states), VLink is focused on expanding opportunities to connect remote employees with company news and provide feedback.

"We have done some employee surveys and created a VLink employee portal this year," said Cyndy Martino-Friedrich, VLink's director of human resources and operations. "We

listen a lot to our employees and want them to share what would make their lives easier; we do our best to meet their needs."

One of those needs, Martino-Friedrich said, is better employee recognition, which she plans to address in a new quarterly newsletter.

"It would be nice to share the feedback our employees receive from our clients," she said.

Some of that recognition has already started to take place. Martino-Friedrich said the company held its annual employee party — featuring more than 100 employees from across the country and their families — in January, at the Hartford Marriott Downtown.

"We acknowledged employees who were celebrating their three-, five- and seven-year anniversaries with the company," she said. "There's real employee loyalty."

Pathammavong attributes that loyalty, in part, to a sense of employee closeness. He points to his unofficial role as VLink sports coordinator as an example. He was empowered to create tournaments and commission leagues.

That has included billiard tournaments, bowling leagues, a cricket team, table tennis and other recreational activities. ■



J. Fiereck
PHOTOGRAPHY

We love having J. Fiereck capture original photography for our agency. The amazing images Jennifer creates are evidence of her creativity and passion for her craft. She captures our brand wonderfully and always understands our vision.

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EXECUTIVE PORTRAITS · EVENTS · BRANDING

#4 Barnum Financial Group



Barnum Financial Group provides investment and risk management products and services to over 250,000 clients including individuals and their families as well as small businesses, corporations, government entities, not-for-profit organizations and their employees. It has offices in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island.

Employee Bonuses: Administrative and management team qualify for an annual bonus program, which awards and recognizes performance.

Employee Recognition: Hosts an annual awards banquet that honors successful advisors, and highlights the administrative associates who performed above and beyond and had a significant impact on the firm.

Fun & Relaxation: Holds off-site events at an amusement park, go-karting, and park outings.

Community Service: Annually gives away over 500

bikes to underprivileged children as part of the Bikes for Kids program throughout the state.

Sounding Board: Publishes the "Barnum Blaze," a newsletter that goes out on a timely basis to share news on new hires, accomplishments in media, community relations news, and birth and wedding announcements.

Healthy Living: Offers discounts on health insurance premiums for the completion of WOW (Working on Wellness) activities like exercise tracking, weight loss and smoking cessation.

#5 Consigli Construction Co. Inc.



Consigli Construction Co. Inc. — a fourth generation, family-owned business established in 1905 — is a full-service construction manager and general contractor, focused on new construction, renovation and landmark restoration for academic, health care, institutional, corporate, life sciences and federal clients throughout the Northeast.

Employee Recognition: Every year at its annual employee meeting Consigli recognizes individuals for their tenure.

Fun & Relaxation: From Memorial Day through Labor Day, each employee receives a half-day every other Friday including the Friday before Memorial Day and Labor Day. Each year Consigli hosts a hockey game of two teams of Consigli employees, coached by executives.

Community Service: Consigli hosts a kids

Christmas party and a field day with BBQ for the Youth United for Survival, also known as the Y-U's program in Hartford.

Healthy Living: Full-time employees receive a complimentary gym membership or up to \$450 annually in health-club reimbursement.

Training: Every employee is required to follow an individual development plan that is discussed at each review.

#6 Burns & McDonnell



Burns & McDonnell is an employee-owned company made up of more than 5,300 engineers, architects, construction professionals, scientists, consultants and entrepreneurs with 35 offices across the country and throughout the world. The Connecticut offices focus on pursuing projects in information technology, project controls and program management, electrical transmission and distribution, nuclear plant construction, cybersecurity, aviation and federal facility design and construction, business consulting and environmental services.

Employee Benefits: The firm's employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) allows employee-owners to share directly in the profitability of the company beginning their first day on the job, at no cost.

Fun & Relaxation: Burns & McDonnell celebrates employee ownership month in October with a number of activities, including an annual pancake breakfast, a treat week, costume contests, trick-or-treating and a lunchbox

trivia competition.

Community Service: The Burns & McDonnell Foundation matches donations to employee's favorite charities up to \$75,000 in contributions annually.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For, 2015; Engineering Employer of the Year, American Council of Engineering Companies, 2015.

#7 Citrin Cooperman



Citrin Cooperman is a full-service accounting, tax and consulting firm serving companies and high-net-worth individuals with offices throughout the Northeast. Citrin offers services in four core areas: attest and assurance; tax compliance and research services; consulting and specialty services; and business advisory services.

Employee Bonuses: Employees receive monetary bonus when they refer a candidate who is hired and is employed for a period of three months. Employees who pass the CPA exam earn a \$1,500 bonus.

Fun & Relaxation: Allows Friday early-dismissals in summer.

Healthy Living: Promotes wellness challenges within the office and between all offices

including monthly step-count competitions.

Sounding Board: Office managing partner holds quarterly lunch meetings with staff.

Training: Each employee is assigned a mentor of their choosing, who provides coaching and career development to staff members.

Community Service: One Friday a month is designated for staff to wear jeans when they contributed \$5 to the charity Citrin chooses.

#8 COCC



COCC is a financial technology company that provides technology services to financial institutions throughout the Northeastern United States. It offers an integrated mobile and online banking product for financial institutions. In addition, COCC offers all clients onsite training and product support.

Employee Bonuses: Employees can vote for one another for going above and beyond their normal work responsibilities. Votes are tallied every quarter then a committee validates votes and selects the top 10 employees who are rewarded with prizes, such as paid time off, TVs, and/or a \$750 gift card.

Fun & Relaxation: Company walking program encourages employees to get up from their desks twice a day, to walk their campus to

promote mental and physical wellness, as well as team building. Also hosts trivia once a month allowing employees to gather in the lunchroom to compete for prizes and bragging rights.

Healthy Living: COCC has an on-site fitness center at its corporate location.

Training: COCC provides on-site coaching roundtable opportunities to employees who are interested in advancing to higher-level positions.

#9 Datto Inc.



Datto provides localized and cloud back-up services to small- and medium-sized businesses.

Fun & Relaxation: Company hosts happy hours, free massages and office parties.

Healthy Living: Offers employees a fitness-reimbursement program. Company also utilizes a wellness fair.

Education & Training: Offers tuition

reimbursement/assistance to employees pursuing advanced or post-graduate degrees. Also pays or supports employees to go to business education workshops or conferences.

Sounding Board: CEO hosts regularly scheduled meetings with employees at least once a month.

#10 Connecticut Business Systems (CBS)



Connecticut Business Systems, a Xerox company, sells the complete line of Xerox digital imaging systems including multi-function devices and production equipment, managed print services, audio visual equipment and software programs. The company serves markets in New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts from eight locations.

Employee Recognition: Recognizes employee of the quarter, and sales rep and service technician of the month.

Fun & Relaxation: Holds team-building meetings and activities including contests to decorate cubicles, Halloween costume contests, bake offs, Thanksgiving potluck in the office, holiday card-design contests for employees' children, and office BBQ's.

Charity Focus: Supports Connecticut Children's

Medical Center, Channel 3 Kids Camp and Connecticut Science Center.

Healthy Living: Offers company-paid biometric screening.

Training: Offers sales and administrative leadership and mentor programs.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: 2009-2013 ECHN award for promoting philanthropy; Best Places to Work in CT, 2015.

#11 Comcast — Western New England Region

Comcast's Western New England Region (WNER) is one of Comcast Cable's 15 regions nationally, and was named the company's region of the year for 2014. The WNER extends from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound, and is responsible for providing products and services to residential and business customers in more than more than 300 communities in Connecticut, Vermont and western Massachusetts, as well as small parts of western New Hampshire and eastern New York.



Employee Bonuses: Employees receive free or discounted cable, Internet and phone services.

Employee Recognition: Service awards luncheons are held twice yearly to honor employees who have reached milestones in their Comcast career, starting with 10 years and moving up in five-year increments.

Fun & Relaxation: Holds special luncheons and barbecues where senior leaders serve employees.

Healthy Living: Walking trails, basketball court, softball and baseball field available for all employees to use on-site at its Enfield call center. Also offers stress management services through meQuilibrium, tobacco-cessation assistance through QuitNet and a 50 percent subsidy for all Weight Watchers programs.

Community Service: Provides one-time, \$1,000 scholarships to students who strive to achieve their potential.

#12 Kforce Inc.



Kforce is a professional staffing services firm, providing flexible and direct-hire staffing professionals. It engages over 23,000 professionals annually with more than 4,000 customers.

Employee Recognition: Top performers get an annual incentive trip for a one-week vacation filled with team and individual events.

Fun & Relaxation: Each office has a full table of silly dress-up sunglasses, hats, wigs, etc., that are frequently worn in the workplace and have created a side product of photo walls of team members in these items. Also hosts tail-gate parties and inter-office bowling events.

Community Service: Participates in annual Toys for Tots drive.

Sounding Board: Hosts quarterly meetings combining team and individual events in addition to information review then a social event like paintball, bowling, etc.

Being Green: Full recycling services are available in all office buildings with a focus on going paperless wherever possible.

Training: Uses mentorship programs with internal sponsors to identify growth potential and targets within the organization.

#13 Bearingstar Insurance



Bearingstar Insurance is a local insurance agency with offices throughout Connecticut. Most Bearingstar employees have been with the agency for decades.

Employee Recognition: Various departments have quarterly awards where recipients are nominated by peers.

Employee Bonuses: Offers employee profit sharing based on overall company results with a bonus paid to employees either as cash or deferred to their 401(k) account.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts theme days: Hawaiian day as an example, where employees dress in beach attire, enjoy lunch and games.

Community Service: Strong partnership with the Special Olympics in Connecticut and

in Massachusetts through donations and volunteering.

Healthy Living: Offers on-site corporate nurse who delivers wellness programs as well as personal health consultations.

Sounding Board: Hosts an internal blog for all employees to discuss customer service experiences, employee appreciation/kudos and other news.

Training: Annual career interest discussions to help employees understand their future goals and help create a plan for development.

#14 Goodwin College



Goodwin College is a nonprofit higher-education institution that provides career-focused degree programs. The school is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Employee Bonuses: Executive team is eligible for annual performance bonus, based on the college's overall performance.

Employee Recognition: The faculty accomplishment wall: A faculty member is selected by their peers, and the display on the wall depicts a small sample of their great accomplishment.

Fun & Relaxation: The day after commencement, Goodwin College sponsors an appreciation day at Lake Compounce for employees, alumni and family members.

Healthy Living: Offers faculty and students

a bike-share program for transportation between campus buildings.

Sounding Board: Prior to each semester, all Goodwin employees join for a morning meeting where the president provides an update on important news and issues. Employee milestone events are announced and celebrated. New hires are introduced.

Training: Employee development committee provides leadership mini-conferences and training throughout the year.

#15 ICON International Inc.



ICON International is a specialized finance company focused exclusively on corporate-barter transactions to help companies restore value to underperforming assets, and to fund corporate expenses.

Employee Bonuses: Offers annual merit-pay increases, depending on performance review.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts three company outings a year: Bowling in April; a summer party; and a holiday party.

Community Service: ICON helps support the Stamford Boys & Girls Club through an annual golf tournament and providing kids free bikes.

Sounding Board: Hosts team-building seminars.

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#16 Stew Leonard's



Stew Leonard's operates grocery stores in Norwalk, Danbury, Newington and Yonkers, N.Y., with sales of nearly \$400 million and 2,000 employees. The company is also known as a fun place for families to shop because of the costumed characters, scheduled entertainment, petting zoo and animatronics throughout the stores.

Employee Bonuses: All hourly employees with two or more years of service participate in profit sharing, which typically equals one or two weeks of pay.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts fun events for employees and families, including summer picnic, children's holiday party, and appreciation days.

Healthy Living: A 10-minute walking route laid out for each store is designed to encourage

employees to take a "walking break" instead of a "coffee break."

Training: Emerging Leaders Program is an intensive two-year program, combining job experiences, mentoring and formalized training for high-potential employees, who upon completion of the program are eligible for an entry level management position.

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HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL



Festive & Cocktail Attire — Black Tie, if you prefer!

The best places to work in Connecticut, large category

(List rankings based on employee survey and assessment conducted by Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa.)
(200 or more U.S. employees)

Rank	Company	Primary contact	No. of CT employees/ Worldwide employees/ Percent female employees	Average annual salary (exempt employees)	Industry	Top executive in CT
1	Edward Jones 786 Enfield St. Enfield, CT 06082 860-745-3440; www.edwardjones.com	Cheryl Downey Consultant 562-433-3176 mediaconsultant@mindspring.com	141 39,870 58%	\$137,971	Financial services	Jim Weddle Managing partner
2	Hinckley Allen 20 Church St. Hartford, CT 06103 860-725-6200; hinckleyallen.com	Meg DeLeo Office administrator 860-331-2684 mdeleo@hinckleyallen.com	62 327 55%	\$195,000	Legal	Thomas S. Marrion Partner
3	Shawmut Design and Construction 116 Washington Ave. North Haven, CT 06473 203-889-5600; www.shawmut.com	Allison Gifford Public relations manager 617-622-7478 agifford@shawmut.com	54 883 38%	\$112,000	Construction	Ken Procino Regional director, Connecticut
4	Barnum Financial Group (1) 6 Corporate Drive Shelton, CT 06484 203-513-6000; www.barnumfinancialgroup.com	Jessica Neuweiler Agency marketing manager 203-513-6155 jneuweiler@metlife.com	288 580 35%	\$65,000	Financial services	Paul Blanco Managing director
5	Consigli Construction Co. Inc. 100 Allyn St. Hartford, CT 06103 860-741-9850; www.consigli.com	Kristen McInnis HR coordinator 508-458-0386 kmcinnis@consigli.com	46 1100 20%	\$94,000	Construction	Michael Walker Project executive
6	Burns & McDonnell 108 Leigus Road, Suite 1100 Wallingford, CT 06492 203-284-8590; www.burnsmcd.com	Jason Dunn HR generalist 203-949-2338 jmdunn@burnsmcd.com	126 5,161 23%	\$89,440	Engineering	J. Brett Williams President & general manager
7	Citrin Cooperman 37 North Ave. Norwalk, CT 06851 203-847-4068; www.citrincooperman.com	Christine Heckman Human resources manager 203-847-4068 heckman@citrincooperman.com	32 688 29%	\$120,000	Accounting	Mark Fagan Managing partner
8	COCC 100 Executive Blvd. Southington, CT 06489 860-678-0444; www.cocc.com	Steve Guglietta Talent development manager 860-674-5364 steve.guglietta@cocc.com	401 408 47%	\$86,118	Technology	Richard A. Leone President & CEO
9	Datto 101 Merritt 7, 7th Floor Norwalk, CT 06851 888-294-6312; datto.com	Jaclyn Langseder HR generalist 203-665-6423 jlangseder@datto.com	358 538 NA	NA	Technology	Austin McChord Founder & CEO
10	CBS, a Xerox Co. 100 Great Meadow Road Wethersfield (2), CT 06109 800-842-0009; cbs-gisx.com	Angela Carontino Client relationship manager 860-667-2900 acarontino@cbs-gisx.com	200 291 31%	\$76,170	Technology	Jay Cartisano President
11	Comcast Western New England Region 222 New Park Drive Berlin, CT 06037 860-505-3399; www.comcastcorporation.com	Chip Warren Sr. manager, employee communications 860-505-3353 chip_warren@cable.comcast.com	1,300 139,000 30%	\$75,331	Telecommunications	Michael Parker Sr. vice president, Western New England Region
12	Kforce Inc. East Hartford, Shelton, Stamford CT 860-291-6800 (3); www.kforce.com	Susannah Feminella Market vice president 203-225-1770 sfeminella@kforce.com	39 2430 55%	\$86,478	Staffing	David Dunkel Chairman & CEO
13	Bearingstar Insurance (4) 11 locations statewide CT 860-644-8500 (5); www.bearingstar.com	Chris Carter HR manager 617-328-2649 chris.carter@arbella.com	82 985 55%	NA	Insurance	Tom Pozzo President, Hartford area
14	Goodwin College 1 Riverside Drive East Hartford, CT 06118 860-528-4111; www.goodwin.edu	Maura Callahan Executive assistant to the provost 860-727-6761 MCallahan@goodwin.edu	524 614 62%	\$50,112	Education	Mark E. Scheinberg President
15	ICON International Inc. 107 Elm St., 15th Floor Stamford, CT 06902 203-328-2300; www.icon-intl.com	Robin Farrar Human resources coordinator 203-328-2359 rfarrar@icon-intl.com	271 271 49%	NA	Financial services, media	John P. Kramer CEO
16	Stew Leonard's 100 Westport Ave. Norwalk, CT 06851 (6) 203-847-7214; www.stewleonards.com	Karen Mazako Vice president, human resources 203-750-6157 kmazako@stewleonards.com	1,313 1941 42%	\$103,908	Retail	Stew Leonard Jr. President & CEO

Source: Individual companies.
Note: The survey process and rankings were managed by the Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa. A two-part assessment was used, including an employer questionnaire and an employee survey. The scores were combined to determine the final ranking. NA = Not available.
(1) An office of MetLife.
(2) Headquarters. There is also a Norwalk office.
(3) East Hartford office.
(4) A member of the Arbella Insurance Group.
(5) South Windsor office.
(6) Three locations statewide.
—Compiled by Stephanie R. Meagher.

#4 Mintz + Hoke



Mintz + Hoke is an integrated, full-service communications firm offering strategic planning, advertising, public relations and social, interactive, media planning and buying, and direct marketing services.

Employee Bonuses: Bonuses are 100 percent discretionary based on executive management decisions. The company also offers incentives to employees who bring in new employees or new clients.

Employee Recognition: On an ongoing basis Mintz + Hoke supplies people with different gift cards for jobs well done.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts massage Fridays and happy hours in the office.

Community Service: Volunteers with Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation and Eversource Hartford Marathon.

Healthy Living: Implementing periodic meditation sessions.

#5 Corporation for Independent Living (CIL)



Corporation for Independent Living (CIL) is a nonprofit development organization founded in 1979 to develop and sustain housing and other community resources that provide affordability, accessibility and independence to those in need. It creates a range of housing opportunities as well as office and program space designed to enhance the quality of services provided. CIL also provides expertise in the development, financing, design, construction and zoning of complex projects.

Employee Bonuses: All employees receive a 2 percent, 5 percent or 10 percent bonus if the company meets or exceeds bonus plan goals set for the year.

Employee Recognition: Staffers are recognized for accomplishments at bi-monthly staff meetings.

Fun & Relaxation: Company shuts down between Christmas and New Year's and hosts bowling parties.

Community Service: Employees get together to serve a meal at a soup kitchen.

Healthy Living: Offers a free gym for employees that it built in the lower level of its office building.

#6 Nicola | Yester



Nicola | Yester provides accounting, tax and management services to closely-held businesses. The company offers a broad range of services for business owners, executives and independent professionals in accounting and taxation, IRS problem resolution, estates and trusts, business formation, financial planning and investment, real estate and business sales.

Employee Recognition: Hands out years of service awards to employees working at the firm 10 years and beyond (every five years thereafter).

Fun & Relaxation: Summer half-day Fridays and Halloween party at work including wearing costumes.

Community Service: Employees participate in

Habitat for Humanity by helping construct houses in the Hartford area.

Healthy Living: Hosts healthy snack Wednesdays where different employees prepare a healthy snack to share with the firm.

Sounding Board: Uses a suggestion box for ideas that solely benefit the firm.

#7 Charles IT



Charles IT is an outsourced IT company that offers comprehensive support for companies that don't have in-house IT, or don't have certain areas of expertise on their existing IT team. It focuses on medical, manufacturing and nonprofit industries.

Employee Bonuses: At the end of the year, employees are given points and earn points via a Jeopardy game. At the end of the game, individuals must distribute their points to peers, which directly correlates to 50 percent of employee bonuses.

Fun & Relaxation: Every quarter the company takes the entire office on a surprise outing. Examples of past outings include ice skating in Rockefeller Center, indoor skydiving, and Blue

Man Group in Boston. Company also hosts bring your dog to work, office parties and other gatherings.

Community Service: Regularly donates money, attends events, and sits on committees of MARC Community Resources.

Healthy Living: Reimbursement of up to \$250 per year for fitness-related employee expenses (gym memberships, new running shoes, exercise equipment, race fees, etc.).

#8 The Lockwood Group



The Lockwood Group communicates clinical and therapeutic advances to a variety of medical experts, healthcare practitioners, and decision makers. Lockwood teams have experience in all major therapeutic areas and many rare diseases, along with highly specialized knowledge in biologics, devices and diagnostics.

Employee Bonuses: All employees are eligible for 2 percent commission for any new business they bring in.

Employee Recognition: Brag book — kudos received by employees and clients are recorded throughout the year and consolidated into a display available at the company.

Fun & Relaxation: Company outings such as family summer off-site retreat (catered box-office

seats at Met's stadium), annual company meeting in Mexico, spontaneous events such as local yacht ride and ice cream social.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: Best Places to Work in CT, 2015.

Training: There are active discussions between HR and managers to identify and provide real-time exposure for employees to new areas of responsibility.

#9 OFI

OFI is a provider of interior environments. Its signature line is furniture manufacturer Herman Miller. In addition, the firm represents over 250 other manufacturers of furniture, equipment and floor covering. They offer a full range of professional services including design support, project coordination, installation, refurbishing and repair.



Employee Bonuses: If monthly sales goals are met, each employee receives a bonus.

Community Service: Donates to dozens of organizations including Catholic Charities of Hartford, American Legion, CT Sports Foundation, and Hartford HS Nepal Project, among others.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts martini nights, al-fresco Fridays, summer picnic, purge parties (to encourage workplace wellness and recycling), a Halloween costume party, Thanksgiving lunch, holiday party and Cinco de Mayo.

Healthy Living: OFI provides daily healthy snacks, water dispensers and herbal tea.

Sounding Board: OFI has an open-door policy. No one at OFI has a private office. Management sits amongst their teams allowing them to be easily accessible and promoting open communication.

Training: OFI offers continuing-education units, which provide certification credits, networking events, formal training and internal and external mentoring programs.

#10 Cooperative Systems



Cooperative Systems provides IT support services, business technology strategy and design, cloud computing and data backup for small to medium businesses in Hartford, Boston and Springfield, Mass.

Employee Bonuses: Individual salary bonus program, which is based on individual performance metrics, team performance metrics and company performance.

Fun & Relaxation: Holds company-sponsored employee events three to four times per year that are fun, and also promote team building.

Community Service: Provides discounted

service rates to nonprofit customers.

Healthy Living: Allows for flexible work schedule to deal with employee's personal needs.

Sounding Board: All staff members have breakfast or lunch with the CEO once every couple of months to promote communication and dialogue.

Training: Every position in the company has a career advancement path defined.

#11 Digital Surgeons



Digital Surgeons is a digital-first marketing agency that helps companies build better brands.

Employee Bonuses: Provides bonuses for employee performance and new-hire referrals.

Employee Recognition: "Hero of the week" award is presented to someone who has shined through that week. They are presented with the handmade award to then pass off to the next "hero" a week later.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts monthly game nights to promote creativity and fun. Play a variation of card games, Xbox games, Dance Dance Revolution and more. Digital also allows for

casual workplace attire.

Community Service: Participates in tree plantings in New Haven.

Healthy Living: Provides employees healthy food and snack options and company outings like hiking after work.

Training: Hosts "Lunch and Learns," which are monthly meetings for anyone interested in the current topic to bring their lunch and hear the presentation.

BEST PLACES TO WORK IN CT 2016

SMALL/MEDIUM COMPANY CATEGORY

#12 Martinez Couch & Associates LLC



Martinez Couch & Associates LLC is a multi-disciplinary firm that provides civil engineering, land surveying, environmental consulting, geographic information system, wastewater engineering, construction inspection and project management services to public- and private-sector clients in Connecticut and throughout the Northeast.

Employee Bonuses: Annual bonuses are given to all active employees and are based on weekly pay and performance.

Employee Recognition: Hosts work anniversary breakfasts recognizing employee longevity with the company.

Fun & Relaxation: Massage therapist comes in

every six to eight weeks.

Community Service: Money from snack sales is used to purchase food to be donated to the local food bank.

Sounding Board: Uses Skype for Business, which allows for instant messaging, screen sharing and video conferencing.

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PrepareCT is led by The Connecticut Small Business Development Center (CTSBDC) in partnership with 16 small business-focused organizations throughout the state.



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to every member of the ADNET team who has helped us grow.

CONGRATULATIONS

to all of the 2016 winners who make our community a better place to work and live.

read the ADNET Story at www.thinkADNET.com



#13 iDevices LLC



iDevices is an app- and product-development company that serves the connected-home industry.

Employee Bonuses: iDevices provides equity to all employees both as a bonus and also to provide added incentive to excel.

Employee Recognition: iDevices formally recognizes a Team Player of the Month, who is highlighted in a weekly newsletter, on all big screens throughout the company's office, and who earns free meals and a preferred parking space.

Fun & Relaxation: Organizes a variety of seasonal activities such as pumpkin-carving

contests, family hay ride, football pool, on- and off-site BBQ events, etc.

Healthy Living: Some employees cycle to work and iDevices provides shower facilities.

Being Green: iDevices is a "no-paper" office: All files, including personnel, are electronic.

Training: Company believes strongly in promoting from within and several current managers and directors were promoted into those roles.

#14 Inspira Marketing



Inspira Marketing is a consumer-engagement marketing agency that helps companies connect people with brands through live events, pop-up retail experiences sampling and social-media campaigns.

Employee Bonuses: The end-of-year incentive trip is rewarded to all staff members once the agency meets its revenue goals. Employees are flown to a surprise destination for a week-end of relaxation and team bonding.

Employee Recognition: Each week employees submit "shout outs" for their colleagues who have done great things to exemplify Inspira's core values.

Fun & Relaxation: The entire company gathers for a quarterly party. The four occasions

include a mini-golf tournament, summer soiree, Halloween event and holiday party.

Community Service: Inspira actively supports Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, benefiting childhood cancer.

Healthy Living: Inspira offers in-office flu shots, a massage day and "take your dog to work day."

Training: Offers employees a \$1,000 stipend each year to attend industry-related webinars and conferences.

#15 ADNET Technologies LLC



ADNET Technologies LLC is a technology consulting firm headquartered in Farmington with offices in Albany, N.Y. Since the firm's inception in 1991, its mission has been to help clients create measurable business value from their IT investments.

Employee Benefits: 401(k), including company match; covers 50 percent-74 percent of employee medical coverage premiums.

Employee Bonuses: Service delivery team members can achieve bonuses based on their billable utilization goals.

Fun & Relaxation: ADNET participated in a Ben & Jerry's Twitter campaign and got the Ben & Jerry's team to bring free ice cream to their Connecticut office.

Employee Recognition: Sales and consulting xElla awards are awarded on a quarterly

basis to members of the engagement and service-delivery teams, based on highest percentage of sales quotas and billable hours achieved, respectively.

Sounding Board: Holds monthly "improv" meetings — a casual, open forum for employees to meet with management, ask questions and share concerns.

Community Service: ADNET holds a three-month long food drive in partnership with employees, partners and clients, raising over 2,000 items for local social services.

#16 Motorlease

Motorlease provides vehicle-leasing services to small and mid-sized fleets. Founded in 1946 and headquartered in Farmington the company pioneered the concept of out-sourced fleet management, specializing in acquisition, disposition, maintenance, insurance and registration.



Employee Bonuses: Full-time employees are eligible for profit sharing. Five percent of pre-tax profits are divided by base salaries of eligible employees.

Employee Recognition: Employee Appreciation Day is held annually with raffle prizes, massage, entertainers and food scheduled throughout the day. Employee anniversaries are also recognized at holiday parties with awards for years of service.

Fun & Relaxation: Holiday events are scheduled during work hours where employees are involved in decorating the office, making

scarecrows, carving pumpkins or other activities. Lunch is brought in for everyone to encourage socialization with these events.

Community Service: Motorlease was top fundraising team for Farmington Valley Relay for Life in 2015 and 75 percent of employees walked during the event in May 2015.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: UConn Family Business Award, 2007.

Healthy Living: Offers fully paid medical insurance premiums including family coverage.

#17 Travel Insured International



Travel Insured International is a travel insurance provider offering worldwide travel insurance protection.

The company offers an array of benefits including emergency assistance and evacuation, trip cancellation, trip interruption and airline-ticket protection, medical insurance and baggage coverage.

Employee Recognition: Electronic badging allows employees to recognize each other for going above and beyond and announce positive feedback from customers.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts holiday dinner party with photo booth.

Community Service: Sponsors the Glastonbury 5K American Liver Foundation road race and raised money through community participants, corporate sponsors and employee

fundraising efforts.

Healthy Living: Sponsors in-house Weight Watchers at Work program and provides cost-reduction incentives to participants.

Sounding Board: Electronic ideas board allows employees to post ideas and other employees to promote the ideas and add additional comments. Status updates allow employees to monitor progress.

#18 IMCORP



IMCORP is a technology company involved in underground power cable reliability. It provides diagnostic services for medium- and high-voltage power cable systems and technology locates existing cable system defects and determines future cable reliability.

Employee Bonuses: Power-Up program motivates associates to meet specific, significant goals and provides fun, varied and meaningful spot rewards including celebrations and time off.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts take your dog to work days.

Community Service: IMCORP is a major corporate sponsor of the Manchester Area Conference of Churches, which provides food, shelter, clothing and advocacy for unmet basic community needs.

Healthy Living: Billiards tables, ping-pong table, basketball hoop, inversion table and medicine

ball used throughout day for exercise, relaxation and team building.

Sounding Board: Company president meets periodically with small groups of employees for breakfast and dinner to talk informally about life at IMCORP, the current goals of the company and his vision for the future.

Training: GREAT (Growth / Results / Excellence / Accountability / Team) program launched in 2015 to promote business-based career and talent development.

#19 Qualidigm

Qualidigm's mission is to improve the quality, safety and cost-effectiveness of health care through transformational change. The Wethersfield-based company provides consulting services to public- and private-sector clients nationwide including data analysis, health-information technology, patient safety, quality improvement and utilization review.



Employee Bonuses: Provides gift cards or other awards for extraordinary contributions, results, assistance, etc. Anyone can nominate another employee for this award.

Employee Recognition: New performance-monitoring software includes a "shout out" feature, where any employee can give a public shout-out to someone else for something well done or appreciated.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts employee potluck lunches — often themed.

Community Service: Support's American Heart Association's Annual Go Red for Women Campaign.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: Best Places to Work in CT, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Sounding Board: Uses a suggestion box on intranet for any and all thoughts, ideas and questions.

Training: Annual goals for each employee include a personal development component — something they must do to increase/enhance their skills.

#20 Core Informatics



Core Informatics is a software company focused on delivering scientific data management to customers in a variety of industries. Core's software can be delivered on premises, or in Amazon Web Services (AWS) via Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) models.

Employee Bonuses: If an employee refers a candidate that ends up getting hired, they receive a \$1,000 referral bonus.

Employee Recognition: Bi-weekly a team member is selected by upper management to receive an MVP award for outstanding work. Also uses an electronic, live shout-out board displayed on a TV in the company's main lobby to recognize employees for their help with a

project, great work, etc.

Fun & Relaxation: Core has small golf greens, golf balls and putters for people to utilize in the office if they need to get away from their desk and take a break for a few minutes.

Being Green: Encourages a paperless office.

Training: Each employee is given a \$1,500 training allowance they can use throughout the year to register for conferences, trainings, buy books, etc.

#21 Tallan



Tallan provides business-technology services aimed at increasing operational efficiency, reducing expenditures and enhancing customer service. Tallan has expertise in the areas of portals and collaboration, business intelligence, application integration, mobile platforms, user experience, e-commerce, custom web development, government solutions, cloud services and IT strategy.

Employee Bonuses: Employees who bill a substantial and above-average number of hours to one or more clients in a calendar month are eligible to receive a productivity bonus.

Fun & Relaxation: Game room available to employees including pool table, big screen TV, darts, foosball and couches to relax and socialize.

Community Service: Participates in the J.P.

Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge race.

Healthy Living: Free healthy snacks and fruit are provided in the office.

Sounding Board: There are shout outs during company meetings hosted by CEO.

Training: Comprehensive, technical and professional training program for recent college graduates including mentorship.

#22 Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity



Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity is part of a global nonprofit that focuses on increasing homeownership opportunities. Habitat for Humanity has built over 225 homes, housing over 1,000 individuals in Hartford County.

Employee Recognition: Monthly feature in an e-newsletter of a staff member.

Fun & Relaxation: All quarterly meetings with the executive director are in a fun environment: High Meadows, Nomads, Laser Quest and pottery painting.

Community Service: Each employee gets five days to build on Habitat's construction sites within the state of Connecticut.

Sounding Board: Hosts quarterly town-hall meetings that are focused around an activity. It requires employees to communicate and discuss the activity and it is then connected to the work environment.

Being Green: Eliminated using paper on construction sites by 75 percent in fiscal year 2015 by using a web-based site to organize volunteers, crew leaders and supervisors.

#23 Continuity



Continuity offers personalized service to community financial institutions through compliance experts and technology.

Employee Recognition: "Seven Geese" recognition helps employees and managers call out individuals for outstanding service.

Fun & Relaxation: Office is a collaborative environment that invites innovation including erasable drawing walls in every room. The environment encourages employees to express their ideas and ensures everyone has the responsibility to innovate.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: Best Places To

Work in CT, 2014; Marcum Tech Top 40, for category and overall tech growth, 2015.

Sounding Board: Senior management hosts weekly "all-hands" meetings on Friday afternoons to discuss weekly occurrences, roll out new initiatives and recognize employees for outstanding service.

Being Green: Continuity uses only green products in its kitchen for cleaning.

#24 Clarity Software Solutions Inc.

Clarity Software Solutions Inc. assists clients with customer relationships by enhancing flexibility and control over their document management and communications delivery. Clarity serves health insurance providers across the country. Its products and services are built with web-based technology, allowing a single communication to be published to any form of media including print, web or email.



Employee Bonuses: All employees are eligible for bonuses based on company and individual performance.

Employee Recognition: Employees can nominate one another to receive recognition for going above and beyond.

Fun & Relaxation: Hosts casual monthly events (some with themes) where food and drinks are

provided.

Community Service: Clarity for Charity is the charitable arm of Clarity Software Solutions supporting shoreline organizations.

Recent Awards/Recognitions: Red Herring Top 100 North America winner, 2015.

Sounding Board: Uses Skype as an internal way for employees to communicate.

The best places to work In Connecticut, small/medium category

(List rankings based on employee survey and assessment conducted by Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa.)
(15-199 U.S. employees)

Rank	Company	Primary contact	No. of CT employees/ Worldwide employees/ Percent female employees	Average annual salary (exempt employees)	Industry	Top executive in CT
1	SMC Partners LLC 10 Columbus Blvd., 2nd Floor Hartford, CT 06106 860-240-5600; smcpartners.com	Patty Matthews Marketing & HR manager 860-240-5600, ext. 122 pmatthews@smcpartners.com	42 42 50%	\$107,000	Consulting	Scott Cleary President & chief servant
2	Fiduciary Investment Advisors 100 Northfield Drive Windsor, CT 06095 860-683-1187; www.fiallc.com	Kristen Klaus Marketing consultant 860-697-7457 kklaus@fiallc.com	54 54 43%	\$85,500	Investment consulting	Mark Wetzel President
3	VLink Inc. 635 Farmington Ave. Hartford, CT 06105 860-247-1400; www.vlinkinfo.com	Elizabeth Thomas HR generalist 860-247-1400, ext. 124 hr03@vlinkinfo.com	49 250 33%	\$80,000	Technology	Sharad Patney CEO
4	Mintz + Hoke 40 Tower Lane Avon, CT 06001 860-678-0473; www.mintz-hoke.com	Christine Matonti Manager, HR & business development 860-679-9783 christinem@mintz-hoke.com	49 54 61%	\$77,000	Advertising, public relations, marketing	Ron Perine President
5	CIL 157 Charter Oak Ave. Hartford, CT 06106 860-509-6747; www.cil.org	Maria Green CFO & vice president 860-509-6754 mgreen@cil.org	23 24 44%	\$45,150	Real estate	Kent Schwendy President & CEO
6	Nicola I Yester 223 Eastern Blvd. Glastonbury, CT 06033 860-633-1194; nicola-yester.com	Steve Prigionieri Partner 860-633-1194 prigionieriS@nicola-yester.com	18 18 61%	\$136,000	Accounting	Norman J. Yester Managing partner
7	Charles IT (1) 98 Washington St., Suite 300 Middletown, CT 06457 860-344-9628; charlescomputerservices.com	Kristina Charles Operations manager 860-344-9628 kristina@charlescomputerservices.com	17 17 29%	\$63,600	Technology	Foster Charles Owner & principal
8	The Lockwood Group 1055 Washington Blvd. Stamford, CT 06901 203-883-8747; www.thelockwoodgrp.com	Amanda Segura HR coordinator 203-883-8760 amanda@thelockwoodgrp.com	31 85 87%	\$94,793	Advertising, public relations, marketing	Matthew Schecter President & CEO
9	OFI 28 Garfield St. Newington, CT 06111 860-666-3357; myofi.com	Danielle Casey Marketing coordinator 860-257-5338 dcasey@myofi.com	35 35 63%	\$94,857	Furniture	Rick Mills President

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from page 29

The best places to work In Connecticut, small/medium category

(List rankings based on employee survey and assessment conducted by Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa.)
(15-199 U.S. employees)

Rank	Company	Primary contact	No. of CT employees/ Worldwide employees/ Percent female employees	Average annual salary (exempt employees)	Industry	Top executive in CT
10	Cooperative Systems Inc. 80 Lamberton Road Windsor, CT 06095 860-523-1000; www.coopsys.com	Scott Spatz Vice president 860-768-3004 sspatz@coopsys.com	19 19 26%	\$69,000	Technology	Bob DeLisa CEO
11	Digital Surgeons 1175 State St. New Haven, CT 06511 203-980-5010; digitalsurgeons.com	Jennifer Copela Administrative assistant 203-980-5010 jennifer.copela@digitalsurgeons.com	39 42 31%	NA	Advertising, public relations, marketing	David Salinas CEO
12	Martinez Couch & Associates LLC 1084 Cromwell Ave. Rocky Hill, CT 06067 860-436-4364; martinezcouch.com	Karen Kellems Heath Office manager 860-436-4364 kheath@martinezcouch.com	39 39 23%	\$107,972	Egineering	Rafael Martinez Managing member
13	iDevices 136 Simsbury Road Avon, CT 06001 860-352-5252; idevicesinc.com	Betsy Gilbert HR director 860-266-4471 betsygilbert@idevicesinc.com	55 63 21%	\$93,133	Consumer electronics	Christopher Allen CEO & founder
14	Inspira Marketing 18 Ann St. Norwalk, CT 06854 203-939-1300; inspiramarketing.com	Gina Cook PR & social media coordinator 203-939-1300 gcook@inspiramarketing.com	34 36 61%	\$63,756	Advertising, public relations, marketing	Jeff Snyder Chief inspiration officer
15	ADNET Technologies LLC 312 Farmington Ave. Farmington, CT 06032 860-409-1700; www.thinkADNET.com	Faith Antion Marketing director 860-409-1703 fantion@thinkADNET.com	38 48 28%	NA	Technology	Edward Laprade President & CEO
16	Motorlease Corp. 1506 New Britain Ave. Farmington, CT 06032 860-677-9711; motorlease.com	Elisabeth Kandrysawtz CEO 860-677-9711 kandrysawtz@motorlease.com	18 19 37%	NA	Fleet management services	Elisabeth Kandrysawtz CEO
17	Travel Insured International 855 Winding Brook Drive Glastonbury, CT 06033 800-243-3174; www.travelinsured.com	Bernadette Bolton Director of corporate culture 800-243-3174, ext. 209 bbolton@travelinsured.com	104 104 56%	\$93,922	Insurance (non- health care)	John Gehris President & CEO
18	IMCORP 50 Utopia Road Manchester, CT 06042 860-783-8000; www.imcorp.com	Marcia Guzy HR director & accounting manager 860-783-8142 marcia.guzy@imcorp.com	77 77 10%	NA	Engineering	Matthew Mashikian CEO & CTO
19	Qualidigm 1290 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 4A Wethersfield, CT 06109 860-632-2008; www.qualidigm.org	Joanne Draper Vice president, human resources 860-613-3696 jdraper@qualidigm.org	48 59 88%	\$105,986	Healthcare consulting	Timothy Elwell President & CEO
20	Core Informatics 36 E. Industrial Road Branford, CT 06405 203-314-2441; corelims.com	Li Hayes Director of employee success 203-314-2441 lhayes@coreinformatics.com	82 84 36%	\$92,000	Technology	Josh Geballe CEO
21	Tallan 175 Capital Blvd. Rocky Hill, CT 06067 860-368-3006; www.tallan.com	Veronica Tkaczuk HR director 860-368-3006 veronica.tkaczuk@tallan.com	84 148 13%	\$101,603	Technology	Craig Branning CEO
22	Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity P.O. Box 1933 Hartford, CT 06144 860-541-2208; hartfordhabitat.org	Christina D'Amato Corporate engagement manager 860-541-2208 christina@hartfordhabitat.org	17 17 53%	\$61,700	Nonprofit	Karraine Moody Executive director
23	Continuity 59 Elm St., Suite 210 New Haven, CT 06510 888-932-6759; www.continuity.net	Jennifer Cristo Director, human resources & finance 866-631-5556 x102 jennifer@continuity.net	32 51 45%	\$137,000	Technology	Andrew Greenawalt CEO & founder
24	Clarity Software Solutions Inc. 92 Wall St., Suite 1 Madison, CT 06443 203-453-3999; www.clarityssi.com	April Begin Marketing communications specialist 203-453-3999 abegin@clarityssi.com	107 109 50%	\$160,000	Healthcare technology	Sean Rotermund President & CEO

Source: Individual companies. Note: The survey process and rankings were managed by the Best Companies Group in Harrisburg, Pa. A two-part assessment was used, including an employer questionnaire and an employee survey. The scores were combined to determine the final ranking. NA = Not available.
(1) Formerly Charles Computer Services.
—Compiled by Stephanie R. Meagher.

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Celebrating the Arts!

at the Greater Hartford Arts Council's Big Red for the Arts

Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate the Arts Council's 45th Anniversary and help kick-off the 2016 United Arts Campaign in style. It was a fun, fabulous evening of delicious food, local spirits and wine - all to support the United Arts Campaign and the transformative power of the arts in our region.

To learn more about the campaign and get involved, visit LetsGoArts.org.



Left to right: Adam Jeamel of United Bank; Morris Banks of Pullman & Comley and President of the Arts Council's Board of Directors; Cathy Malloy, Arts Council CEO; and Eric Daniels of Robinson+Cole and 2016 United Arts Campaign Chair



Left to Right: Vera Winfree of the Judy Dworin Performance Project and Endia DeCordova of Manchester Community College



Al Kim, artist with Veterans Art Foundation, which receives grant funding from the Arts Council, stands next to one of his works, which was on display as part of the evening's artist showcase.



Guests, including Alex Smith and Christine Pina, enjoyed signature dishes from some of the region's best restaurants, as well as local brews and spirits as the Arts Council celebrated its 45th Anniversary.



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